

IN THE CLAIMS:

Cancel claim 1 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Please amend the claims 22, 23, 29 and 30 as follows:

22. (Amended) A test tube, comprising:
a tube body of unitary construction comprising an enclosed sidewall and an integral bottom that together define a tubular container having an open top, wherein said bottom has an exterior surface upon which machine readable data is encoded within an opaque coating deposited onto said exterior surface to uniquely identify said test tube.

23. (Amended) The test tube of claim 22, wherein said opaque coating comprises: a first layer of light colored opaque material deposited onto said exterior surface; and a second layer of dark colored opaque material deposited onto said first layer, with select portions of said second layer having been removed to define said machine readable data.

29. (Amended) A method of manufacturing a test tube, comprising the steps of:
providing a tube body of unitary construction comprising an enclosed sidewall with an open top and an integral bottom with an exterior surface;

applying an opaque coating to said exterior surface; and
encoding machine readable data within said opaque coating.

30. (Amended) The method of claim 29 wherein the application of said opaque coating comprises the steps of:

- a) depositing a first layer of opaque material onto said exterior surface; and
- b) depositing a second layer of opaque material onto said first layer, wherein said first and second layers are of contrasting colors.